

The  
Shakespeare  
Anagrams

As used by

Ben Jonson

In the First Folio 1623: and  
by Shakespeare.

Recently Discovered and Now  
Published for the First Time  
By

A Shake-spearean.

London:  
Gay and Bird, Bedford Street, W.C.  
1902.

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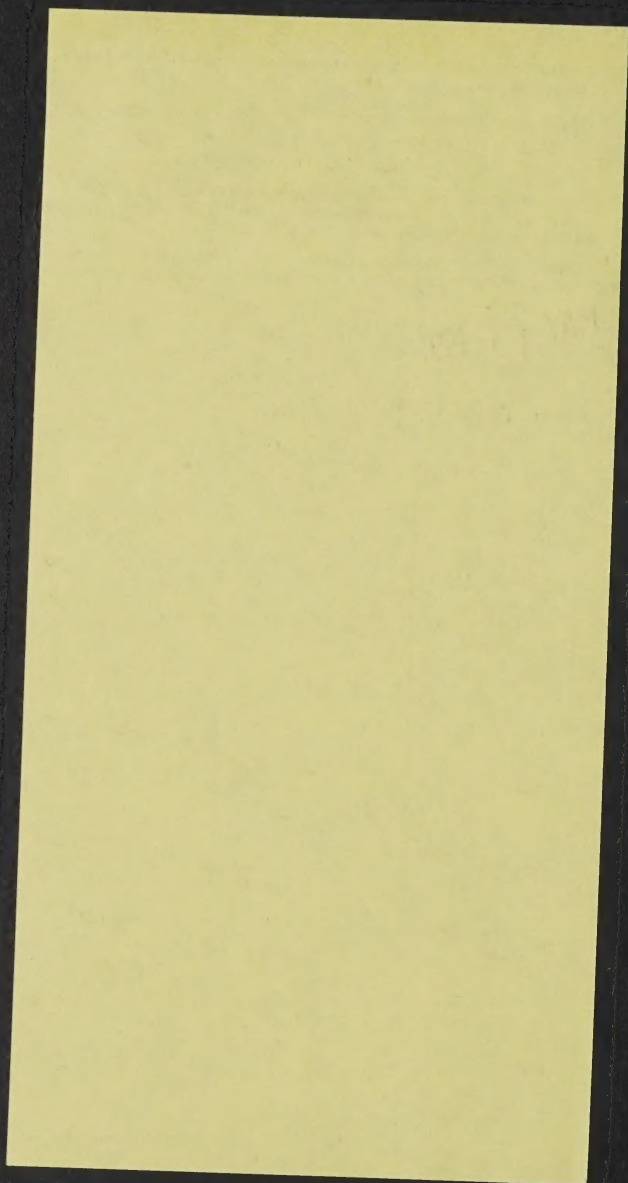
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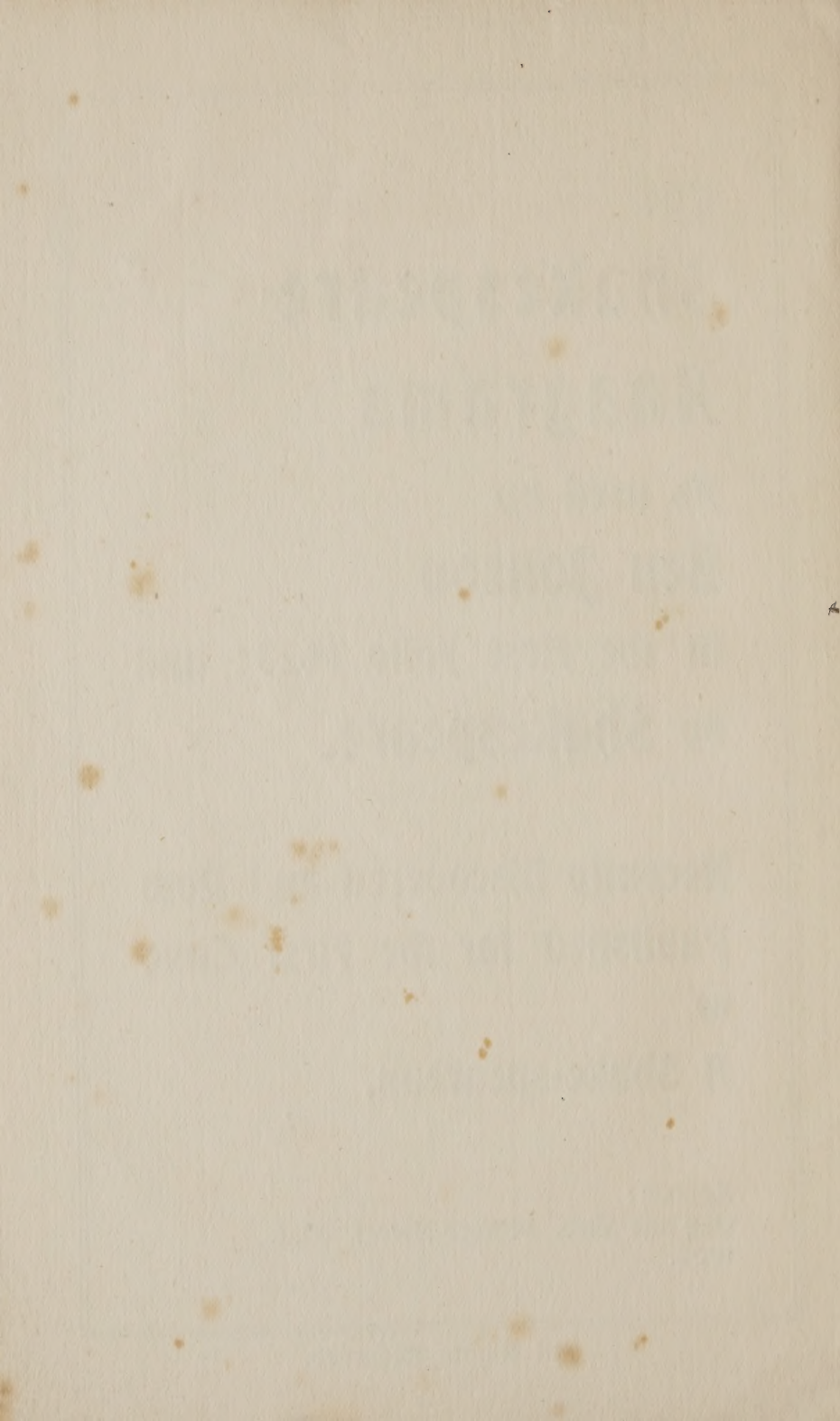
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## The Shakespeare Anagrams.

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THE Shakespeare-Bacon controversy has lately excited widespread interest, and many thousand readers are eager for incontrovertible proof on one side or the other. The subject has forced its way into magazines and reviews, also into "correspondence columns" and leading articles of the daily press. With semblance of impartiality, newspapers have even deigned to insert a few letters from avowed Baconians when not too much to the point. But one editor has suggested: "It seems to us that it is not Shakespeare or Bacon, but Ben Jonson who needs explaining." Let Hamlet reply: "*Seems*, nay, *it is*; I know not *seems*."

The reader has only to consider the importance which Shakspearean scholars attach to Ben Jonson's printed testimony to realise how their long-accepted theories built upon it may be shaken when his real attitude is fully understood.\* His seemingly contradictory statements have already disconcerted some critics; while many students have found, in the same phrases, corroborations of their anti-Shakspeare theories.

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\*On Bishop Tenison's authority we know that Ben Jonson assisted Francis, and was one of his "good pens," both before and after his "fall."

To instance one case: In his long eulogy he writes of "Shakespeare" as the greatest of all writers that ever wrote, adding the remarkable phrase that "he may be left alone for the comparison of all that insolent Greece and haughty Rome sent forth." A few years later when both Shakspeare and Bacon were dead, Jonson, in his *Scriptorum Catalogus*, discourses on the great men he has known. But now it is Francis Bacon who, *as a poet*, receives the same eulogy, together with the full acknowledgment of his powers of versification: "*He hath filled up all numbers, and performed that in our tongue, which may be compared or preferred either to insolent Greece or haughty Rome . . . . he may be named, and stand as the mark and acme (ἄκμῇ) of our language.*"

However, our present purpose is not to explain, or even point out, the various puzzling contradictions; but to make known part of a new discovery, and to ask a few questions.

In the Folio Edition of 1623, the poem entitled "To the Reader," which faces the portrait, and which has been generally attributed to Ben Jonson's pen, proves to be not only an innocent tribute to the "Graver" and the writer of the Plays, but a skilfully constructed "anagrammaticke cyphar" or, as is now styled, "progressive anagram." And in this anagram

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For a concise statement of the general subject, read *The Problem of the Shakespeare Plays*, by G. C. Bompas.

the Shakespeare Plays are claimed for "Francis Saint Albans" and "Francis Bacon"; and this not only once, but *nine times in the ten lines.*

Before examining this anagram, it is well to remove from our minds the confusion which arises from the unsettled and reckless spelling of Shakspeare's and Shakespeare's names. The plays, when not issued anonymously, appeared as by **Shakespeare** or **Shake-speare**; whereas the actor always retained his baptismal name of **Shakspeare** and, as far as we know, never used the longer form of the first syllable. The only five signatures yet discovered are here given:—

W<sup>m</sup> Shakspeare

William  
Shakspeare

William  
Shakspeare

William Shakspeare

William Shakspeare

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As printed in Harold Bayley's Francis Bacon.

The hyphenated name appears seventeen times.



Owing to the curiously old-fashioned construction of the letters, the name sometimes appears longer than it really is;\* but in every instance the first syllable is **Shaks** not **Shakes**. Indeed, the correctness of the short sound of the **a** is confirmed by his name being also found as **Shagspere** and **Shaxpere**. In the body of his will, completed in March, 1616, the month before his death, his first syllable is in every case written **Shacks**; and to end this *vital* matter consistently, the short syllable **Shaks** appears upon his Stratford monument.

Hitherto the actor's enthusiasts having assumed the plays to be his, have, according to individual fancy, either enriched his name with additional letters to force uniformity with the name on the Plays; or have laid violent hands on the latter, shaking out the offending letters to force agreement with the actor's signatures. (In the near future, the fact of William

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\*These signatures are given merely for authority as to the proper spelling. Sir Frederick Madden writes: "Malone afterwards agreed with an anonymous correspondent, who showed most clearly, that the superfluous stroke in the letter *r* was only the tremor of Shakspeare's hand, and no *a*. In this opinion, after the most scrupulous examination, I entirely concur, and can repeat with confidence the words of Mr. Boaden, that "if there be truth in sight, the poet himself inserted no *a* in the second syllable of his name." *Observations of an Autograph of Shakspeare and the Orthography of his name* (p. 12).

Shaks—pere having this longer spelling so “thrust upon him” may come to be generally regarded as not the least of the curiosities of literature.)

Having now satisfied ourselves on this point, we will investigate the “Ben Jonson” anagram\* which from the curious wording of the verse raised suspicion as to its presence.

Is there in the address “To the Reader,” some concealed meaning respecting “his Booke”—possibly the author’s name? Let us try if “William Shakspere” can be read into it. We find **w** in the second line, **i** in the third, **l** in the fourth, **l i a** in the sixth, but we look to the last line vainly for an **m**. The total result is only **Willia**. That is evidently not the concealed meaning. “Benjamin” or “Ben Jonson” will not read once. And yet critics contend that secret information as to authorship, if contained *anywhere, should be in this poem*. (On the next page each reading of the anagram is shewn by its respective mark or figure.)

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\*A progressive anagram has a very limited scope and presupposes on the part of the recipient, a knowledge, or at least an expectation, of the words likely to be therein concealed.

## TO THE READER.

This Figure, that thou here seest put  
 It was for gentle Shakespeare cut;  
 Wherein the Graver had a strife  
 with Nature, to out-doo the life:  
 O, could he but have drawne his wit  
 As well in brasse, as he hath hit  
 His face; the Print would then surpasse  
 All, that was euer writ in brasse.  
 But since he cannot, Reader, looke  
 Not on his Picture, but his Booke.  
 B. I.

Now see if "Francis Saint Albans" is intended. We start with the first **F**: then look for the next **r**—spelling steadily on, not turning back, but noting each required letter as it comes—then **a**, then **n-c-i-s** and so on, until **F-r-a-n-c-i-s S-a-i-n-t A-l-b-a-n-s h-i-s B-o-o-k-e** is completed. This is contained perfectly and requires the entire poem. We now seek for confirmation of the result by reading the same from the second **f**: this reading also gives **FRANCIS SAINT ALBANS HIS BOOKE**. There being three more **f**'s, we try from the third and get **FRANCIS SAINT ALB.\* HIS BOOKE**. The fourth **f** also gives **FRANCIS SAINT ALB. HIS BOOKE**. One **f** still remains, and from it we get **FRANCIS HIS BOOKE**, also an 'intermediate' or 'link' introducing a second anagram **FRANCIS B HIS BOOKE**.

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\*His various names and abbreviations, as used anagrammatically and in his correspondence, will be treated of when a general collection of anagrams is ready for publication.



## To the Reader.

**This Figure, that thou here seest put**

**It was for gentle Shakespeare cut;**

**Wherein the Graver had a strife**

**with Nature, to out-doo the life :**

**O, could he but have drawne his wit**

**As well in brasse, as he hath hit**

**His face; the Print would then surpasse**

**All, that was euer writ in brasse,**

**But since he cannot, Reader, looke**

**Not on his Picture, but his Booke.**

**B. I.**

But so as not to crowd the text with a multiplicity of printer's references, the FRANCIS BACON anagram is given in the second impression.

Having seen the readings from the fifth **f**—FRANCIS and FRANCIS B, we start again with the fourth **f** and get FRANCIS BACON HIS BOOKE. The third **f** gives FRANCIS BACON HIS BOOKE. We observe that all the former readings require the text to the last letter. From the second **f** we get Francis Bacon his Booke : from the first **F** also we get Francis Bacon his Booke. These last two spellings end on the word "looke"; so possibly the student is now prepared to act upon Ben Jonson's advice and "LOOKE NOT ON HIS (SHAKS-PERE'S) PICTURE BUT HIS (SHAKE-SPEARE'S) BOOKE.\*

We ask: Is it possible to read into this text any other two probable names, in the same perfection of orderly sequence, nine or ten times in as many lines?\*

The importance of this discovery is very far-reaching. For if the anagram cannot be refuted, it proves that Ben Jonson must either have written it himself, or have consented to its appearing above his initials. Either conclusion implies his assisting in a great literary mystery. In which case, is not the controversy entirely shifted from Shaks—pere the actor, to the playwright (assisted or alone) who appears to have used, for purposes best known to himself, a nearly similar name?†

Now comes another matter of importance. The illustrious writer who acquired his vast reputation as “Francis Bacon” appears to have had doubts respecting the name by which he would be known to “future ages and foreign nations.” Fortunately this uncertainty—which still exists—appears to have been fully foreseen, and provided for by a three-fold cipher-signature or pen-name lest the future decipherers should search in vain.

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\*To appreciate the manipulation of words required in constructing such an anagram, let the reader try to build a similar specimen.

†Precedent and inference respectively may surely permit the hyphenation, Shake—speare and Shaks—pere, until present-day contentions are either disproved or confirmed.

James Spedding, in his *Life and Times of Francis Bacon*, writes: "When Lord Verulam or Lord Saint Albans was spoken of, it was necessary to explain that the person meant was Sir Francis Bacon; and thus the surname, which *he had himself meant to part with for ever*, had to reappear upon the title-pages of his works. . . . . To correct a name\* by which a famous man is popularly known is a vain ambition, and I can do no more than abstain in my own person from committing or sanctioning the barbarism. The surname, though a continual annoyance, I am obliged continually to use; but the false title [Lord Bacon] may be dispensed with if the people are so disposed."

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\*Or reputation either, while school books and general works of reference remain uncorrected by the facts brought to light in State Papers, which are now accessible to historians. As to the charge of 'bribery,' Spedding writes: (vol. ii, p. 631) "The records of Parliament tell distinctly in Bacon's favor. They show that the circumstance of his conviction did encourage suitors to attempt to get his decrees set aside; that several such attempts were made, but that they *all failed*; thereby strongly confirming the popular tradition reported by Aubrey, 'his favorites took bribes, but his Lordship always gave judgment *secundum æquum et bonum*. His decrees in Chancery stand firm. *There are fewer of his decrees reversed than of any other Chancellor.*'" It would seem in this matter that the bitter enmity, or eager rivalry, towards Francis was fairly typified in *Æsop's Wolf and the Down-stream Lamb*, and that on this account he altered his first intention, and preferred to plead guilty to a technical fault which had been ignored for generations, but which had led to no abuse in him. (See Note p. 19.)



As far as has yet been discovered, "Francis Saint Albans" is the most frequent form of the cipher-signature, although "Francis Verulam" is often met with. Sometimes both names are used together, either concurrently or in sequence. The latter name is favoured by Mr. Spedding. But the former appears to have had a special fascination for Francis from earlier days, as this anagram abundantly testifies. Is not some obscurity now removed from his joyful letter to King James on obtaining the *legal* right to the name he so long had cherished? For after enumerating his many but late promotions, he adds: "So this is the eighth rise or reach, a diapason in music, even a good number and accord for a close. *And so I may without superstition be buried in St. Alban's habit or vestment.*"\* May not this sentence have been used to arrest special attention in the "future ages" to the matter of *disguises*? For according to tradition St. Alban himself, when concealing a Christian priest from Diocletian's soldiers from Verulam, disguised himself in the priest's habit: which self-sacrificing impersonation led to his martyrdom.

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\*The name of Verulam also is associated with his "burial." His will directs that he be buried in St. Michael's, "the only Christian Church within the Walls of Ancient Verulam." Has he not "buried" himself in these two cipher names many times?

But to return to the cipher: and following Ben Jonson's instructions, let us seek confirmation in the plays.

*Love's Labour's Lost* closes with two poems introduced thus:—

*Armado.* . . . . But most esteemed greatness, will you hear the Dialogue that the two Learned men have compiled, in praise of the Owl and the Cuckoo? It should have followed in the end of our shew.

*King.* Call them forth quickly; we will do so.

*Armado.* Hollo! Approach.

*Enter All.*

This side is *Hiems*, Winter; this *Ver*, Spring: the one maintained by the Owl, the other by the Cuckoo. *Ver*, begin.

Suspecting the introduction of the Cuckoo is to symbolize placing the plays in a name by which the author was not then known, our curiosity is aroused to look into this pair of companion poems.

*Ver* is not only the Spring, but the small river flowing between St. Albans and Verulam, which the youthful Francis knew so well, and across which the proto-martyr walked to his place of martyrdom. (Are we again encroaching upon the "symbolicke cyphar" to which Francis has referred?) In the Ben Jonson poem we found *two men under one name*. Have we here "*two Learned*" names standing for *one Learned man*? And has Shake—speare been pointing to this cipher these three hundred years and the world not observed his directing finger until now? Let us see.

## SPRING.

From the first <b>V</b>	When daises pied, and violets blue,	From the first italic <i>f</i>
VERULAM	And lady-smocks all sil <b>ver</b> -white,	
	And <b>cuckoo</b> -buds of yellow hue,	
	Do <b>paint</b> the <b>medows</b> with delight ;	
VERULAM	The cuckoo then, on <b>every</b> tree,	FRANCIS
	Mocks married men, <i>for</i> <b>thus</b> sings he,	
	Cuckoo ;	
	Cuckoo, cuckoo ;—O word of fear,	
	Un <b>plea</b> sing to a <b>mar</b> ried ear !	
	When shepherds pipe on oaten straws,	VERULAM
	And merry larks are plowman's <b>clocks</b> ,	
	When turtles tread, and rooks, and daws,	
	And <b>maiden</b> s bleach their summer	
VERULAM	The cuckoo then, on <b>every</b> tree, [smocks ;	to the last M.
	Mocks married men, for <b>thus</b> sings he,	
	Cuckoo ;	
	Cuckoo, cuckoo ;—O word of fear,	
to the last M.	Un <b>plea</b> sing to a <b>mar</b> ried ear !	

In *Armado's* name (the First Folio has *Braggart*) he says, "*Ver*, begin." Having now the key, we naturally anticipate the result, and it does not fail us.

Letting the "**ver**" begin, which is in "silver," and noting the other expected letters as we proceed, verse 1 renders **Verulam** to the last **m**. The "**ver**" in verse 2 renders **Verulam** to the last **m**. Verse 4 being a repetition of verse 2, of course renders **Verulam**. There is, however, one more **v**, that in the first line. Starting with that letter and the **e**, also in "violets," we are brought again to the **r** in "silver." That reading therefore gives the same result: and the willing decipherer is thereby shewn how to find innumerable confirmations in the Works, by following up the same method. Now



## WINTER.

From the first S	When icicles <b>s</b> hang by the wall,	
SAINT ALBANS	And Dick the Shepherd blows his <b>nail</b> ,	From the first <i>f</i>
	And Tom <b>bears</b> logs into the hall,	
	And milk comes <i>f</i> rozen home in <b>pail</b> ;	<i>Francis</i>
	When <b>blood</b> is nipt, <b>and</b> ways be foul,	
	Then nightly <b>s</b> ings the <b>staring</b> Owl	
	To-who ;	
SAINT ALBANS	Tu-whit, to-who, <b>a</b> merry note,	
	While greasy Jone doth keel the pot.	
	When all aloud the wind doth <b>blow</b> ,	
	<b>And</b> coughing drowns* the parson's <b>saw</b> ,	SAINT
	And <b>birds</b> sit brooding in <b>t</b> he snow,	ALBANS
	<b>And</b> Marrian's nose looks red and raw ;	
	When roasted crabs hiss in the bowl,	
SAINT ALBANS	Then nightly sings the <b>staring</b> Owl	
	To-who ;	
to the last S.	Tu-whit, to who, a merry note,	to the last S.
	While greasy Jone doth keel the pot.	

beginning with the first *f* the rendering, down to the poem's last **m**, is **Francis Verulam**.

As the one cipher-signature appears in the first poem, and the river Ver reminded us of the *two* adjacent names, we naturally suspect '**Saint Albans**' to have been worked into the companion stanzas—in which, by the way, no letter **v** has been included.

Beginning with the first **s** and carefully spelling **Saint Albans** *thrice* consecutively, the reading brings us to the last **s**. And starting with the poem's first *f*, the rendering to the last **s** is **Francis Saint Albans**. The reading from the only other *f* tells the same tale.

\*This **s** comes in both readings.

Thus we have the Cuckoo's—

“Verulam, Verulam, Verulam, Francis Verulam,”

and the Owl's—

“Saint Albans, Saint Albans, Saint Albans, Francis  
Saint Albans,”

to be again proclaimed before His Most  
Esteemed Greatness the King, with all  
the stage, or all the world, to hear.

Then follows the conclusion of the  
play :

*Arm.* : The words of Mercurie are harsh  
after the Songs of Apollo :  
You, that way ; we, this way.

*Exeunt Omnes.*

The student is now provided with Ben Jonson's and “Shake-speare's” plan for recognising the latter's cipher signatures in any good edition of the works. (An occasional reference to facsimiles of the First Edition adds interest). The writer had observed many other examples in the Plays before he noticed this “Ver, begin,” and he at once surmised it to be “Shake-peare's” own clear prompting. Whether rightly or wrongly, each individual must decide for himself. No expert's opinion can help him—as in the Dreyfus case ! But the writer entirely disclaims “ingenuity” in this matter : he merely found what he looked for. This ‘*Ver*’ is, indeed, but part of the “cuckoo's egg” peeping over the nest's edge. The diligent searcher will soon descry, in many a copse and hedge-row, the nests where other of these “cuckoo's eggs” are found. A collection of them is being formed, and any specimens which readers may kindly send will be thankfully received by the Author of the Shake-speare Anagrams, c/o The Publishers.

We now feel justified in asking the Positive Shaks—perean: Why should Shake—speare (not necessarily Shaks—pere) have woven these *absolutely perfect anagrams* into the Plays' warp and woof, and have given instructions for finding them, unless the finder is intended to accept the manifest meaning? And because the connection of "Shakespeare" and "Bacon" did not publicly appear in early days, are we justified in concluding, as is done so often, that they were quite foreign to each other?

But if we heed what Ben Jonson and Shake—speare have thus told us, should we not carefully inquire how far the Plays are indebted to the matchless intellect of Lord Verulam,\* and how far to William Shaks—pere, Anthony Bacon "the poet," or others?

Furthermore, if cleverly-circulated contemporary reports sufficed to conceal

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\*Francis Bacon and his brother Anthony appear to have had a passion for the drama. Anthony, soon after his return in 1592 from his travels, left his brother to take up his abode in Bishopsgate, near the Bull Theatre, where several of the Shakespeare plays were acted. Their mother, Lady Anne Bacon, was gravely concerned as to her sons' taste for stage performances, and wrote that she trusts "they will not mum, nor mask, nor sinfully revel at Gray's Inn"; but Francis Bacon continued through life to be the 'chief contriver' of the masques at Gray's Inn.—*Bompas' Problem of the Shakespeare Plays.* (p. 23.)

from the world the Plays' real author (or authors) how can a reliable theory be built up of fragments of the same deceptive reports, which have survived as 'tradition'? And, if we assume it possible that documents may have been lodged, with instructions, as a secret trust, in the custody of some select society such as Francis would institute or adopt, is there any reason for supposing his conditions would not be reverently observed? Evidences are not wanting that such papers *are* being preserved both by corporate societies and private individuals; therefore, our final question is: *Has not the time about arrived for opening and publishing the various guarded packets which are known to exist?*



FRANCIS BACON : FRANCIS SAINT ALBANS.

CONCEALED BY B.I., 1623.

RELEASED DEC. 13, 1901.




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\*See Mrs. Pott's "Francis Bacon and his Secret Society," and Waite's "Rosicrucians."



## Note.

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Since this pamphlet was written Mr. Leslie Stephen has published his interesting essay on James Spedding. He states (*National Review*, April, 1902) that during the period of over thirty years, from 1841 to 1874, Spedding gave his whole strength to writing the life and editing the works of Bacon: that, having been first attracted to the *Apology* concerning the Essex affair, he plunged into the study of Bacon; and no remonstrance or entreaty, coupled with an offer of a place of £2,000 a year, could induce him to relinquish his self-imposed duty. Mr. Leslie Stephen adds (p. 256): **"Carlyle took Cromwell for his ideal as Spedding took Bacon, and each of them showed triumphantly that the vulgar conception of history was absurd."**



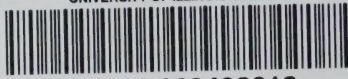








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